

Re \_\_\_\_\_ : The present situation of Ukrainian catholics in the  
Ukraine , in the aftermath of Podgorny's visit to the Pope

Date \_\_\_\_\_ : 31 May 1967

Source : *Assessment/297*  
*who*

The following information was obtained from one of the  
highest authorities of Ukrainian Catholic Church in Rome , Italy on  
23 May 1967: *(Bulko)*

1. A gradually developing "connivance" on the part of Soviet  
authorities at religious practices of Ukrainian catholics in the  
West Ukraine has followed Podgorny's trip to the Pope. Until now  
about 70 churches in West Ukraine have been "re-opened" by the  
catholic faithful in various villages and registered "in blank" or  
rather only reported to the authorities about their existence and  
more or less regularly held religious services. The authorities  
have not interfered so far in the masses and other services but  
on the contrary, showed unprecented tolerance and ~~went~~ understanding".  
They refuse however to formally register the reopened churches as  
catholic pointing out that the Catholic Church is still outlawed  
and could be not registered as such. Instead Kiev suggests to  
find a new formula , for instance "The Eastern church" or something  
similar.

The faithful do not acquiesce to such <sup>1</sup>formulas and insist  
on being registered as catholic. This is done on "quiet instructions"  
from the Vatican which continues to exert diplomatic pressure  
on Soviet authorities taking advantage of Podgorny's visit to the  
Pope.

The Source was of the opinion the chances were quite good  
to slowly obtain some sort of official recognition of Ukrainian  
catholics by Soviet authorities provided the present attitude of  
Soviet authorities would not change .

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So far ,however, the reopened church~~s~~ have remained unregistered or rather as some people called it " registered in blanco ".

2. The authorities have indicated that they are also fully aware of existence of "private catholic monasteries" in Lvov but did not mind it as long as they did not profess their faith and/or otherwise act in public.

3. According to the Source the Ukrainian Cathdic hierarchy in Rome had<sup>a</sup> record of about 1,000 patholic priests in the Soviet Union and more or less continued to "count on them". With a great satisfaction they ( in Rome) also appraised the fact that recently quite a large number of young people had joined the ranks of "secret" catholic monks andpriests.

4. After Podgorngi's visit new efforts are also made by the ~~Vatican diplomacy~~ to induce the Soviet authorities to give to Ukrainian catholics one of the closed Polish churches in Lvov.